
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5446

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE STERILIZATION AND VACCINATION OF CERTAIN DOGS AND CATS AND PROVIDING FOR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires new animal control officers (ACOs) starting on or after July 1, 2012 to complete at least 80 hours of initial ACO training. It also requires all ACOs to complete at least six hours of continuing education training annually. The agriculture commissioner must (1) prescribe the initial ACO training curriculum, which must include specified topics; (2) reimburse costs for people participating in the initial ACO training; and (3) adopt regulations concerning the continuing education requirement.

The law establishes a voucher system for paying veterinarians who vaccinate and sterilize impounded, quarantined, or stray dogs and cats. By law, people acquiring an unspayed or unneutered dog or cat from a pound must pay the pound \$45 for a voucher to sterilize and vaccinate the animal. The bill allows a pound to complete and retain a voucher to have the animal sterilized and vaccinated before releasing it to the person adopting or buying it. It also allows a pound to complete and submit a voucher to a veterinarian to sterilize and vaccinate a dog or cat that has not been adopted or bought and has pyometra, an infection of the uterus.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except for the voucher provisions, which are effective October 1, 2012.

NEW ACO TRAINING

Under the bill, a person cannot begin serving as an ACO on or after July 1, 2012 unless he or she (1) completes at least 80 hours of ACO training and receives a certificate of completion from the agriculture

commissioner or (2) provides the commissioner with an affidavit agreeing to complete the training within one year of starting as an ACO.

The bill requires the commissioner to maintain records to document compliance with this training requirement.

Training Cost

The bill requires the commissioner to reimburse each person who completes the ACO training the costs of the program from the animal population control account.

Training Curriculum

The bill requires the commissioner, by July 1, 2012, to prescribe the ACO training standards and curriculum, which must include:

1. animal identification;
2. state laws on animal control, protection, and cruelty;
3. animal health and disease recognition, control, and prevention;
4. the humane care and treatment of animals;
5. animal care and control standards in an animal shelter;
6. animal transportation standards and procedures;
7. principles and procedures for capturing and handling stray domestic animals and wildlife, including how to deter an animal from biting;
8. first aid for injured animals;
9. documenting animal cruelty evidence and courtroom procedures;
10. animal shelter operations and administration;
11. animal spaying, neutering, microchipping, and adoption;

12. communications and public relations;
13. search warrants and affidavits;
14. ACO civil liability;
15. crisis intervention and officer safety; and
16. other topics related to animal control and animal shelter personnel.

Training Certificate

The bill requires a person, upon satisfactorily completing the ACO training, to give the commissioner evidence of completing the program. The commissioner must then issue the person a certificate that contains the person's name, the training program name, and the completion date. The bill allows the commissioner to charge a reasonable fee for the certificate.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 27 Nay 1 (03/21/2012)